

*Post-print*

Authors:	Häkli Jouni
Name of article:	Transboundary Networking in Catalonia
Name of work:	Boundaries and Place : European Borderlands in Geographical Context
Editors of work:	Kaplan David, Häkli Jouni
Year of publication:	2002
ISBN:	0-8476-9882-3
Publisher:	Rowman & Littlefield
Pages:	70-92
Discipline:	Social sciences / Social and economic geography
Language:	en

URN: <http://urn.fi/urn:nbn:uta-3-960>

All material supplied via TamPub is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all part of any of the repository collections is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or educational purposes in electronic or print form. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone who is not an authorized user.

# Transboundary Networking in Catalonia

JOUNI HÄKLI

## Introduction

Several interesting trends regarding the political-economic and cultural transformation of the European borderlands are coming together in the northeast of the Spanish peninsula. The autonomous region of Catalonia features active co-operation with other European regions both near and far and serves as an exemplary case of political leaders and other prominent actors finding networking a good strategy for increasing the region's economic performance, political power, and cultural sustainability. Catalonia is also one of the European regions directly influenced by the political and economic drive for a borderless Europe. Since the inception of the Single European Market in January 1993, people and goods have freely crossed the Franco-Spanish state boundary (Grant 1998). Furthermore, Catalonia is currently one of the most prosperous regions in Spain, with a strong political autonomy negotiated with and against the Spanish central government (Guibernau 1997; Mouqué 1999).

It is hardly surprising, then, that much in the same way as north central Italy is at times viewed as the showcase of network economy, Catalonia has become a model for possible future political developments in Europe (Cooke 1989; Cossentino 1996; Keating 1996). This interest is inspired not only by the region's current vitality and unique historical development but also by the discourses of new regionalism and the changing nation-state in the face of economic globalisation and intergovernmental co-operation. Probably the most explicit treatment of Catalonia as model is presented in Castells's (1997) influential book *The Power of Identity*. Castells identifies Catalonia as a nation without a state, yet in 'search for a new kind of state [which] would be a state of variable geometry, bringing together respect for the historically inherited Spanish state with the growing autonomy of Catalan institutions'.

In other words, Catalonia represents a break with traditional nationalism striving for a separate nation-state. Rather than irredentism as such, it aims at integration with a broader entity, which is not only the European Union, but 'various networks of regional and municipal governments, as well as of civic associations'. These multiple horizontal relationships represent a new social organisation emerging 'under the tenuous shell of modern nation-state' (Castells 1997: 50).

In Castells's (1997: 50) view, the Catalan case is particularly significant because it is a 'historical innovation'. The Catalan political and cultural autonomy is extended through 'the networking of power sharing institutions', not through contestation of the Spanish territorial sovereignty. Castells (1997: 50) concludes that

this model 'seems to relate better than traditional notions of sovereignty to a society based on flexibility and adaptability, to a global economy, to networking of media, to the variation and interpenetration of cultures'. Thus as a society of borderless trade, cultural identity, and flexible government institutions, the Catalans are perhaps the 'chosen people' of the information age.

In this chapter my intention is to evaluate some of the arguments about the European and global political transformations by looking at the processes of cross-border regionalisation in Catalonia (see figure 5.1).



**Figure 5.1** Regions of Catalonia (Catalunya), Midi-Pyrénées, and Languedoc-Roussillon at the Franco-Spanish boundary (Source: Modified from the *Atles de l'Euroregio* 1995).

With emphasis on one particular context among the European borderlands, I seek to critically assess the thesis of a growing disconnection between territory and national identity and the disappearance of borders as a result of increasing cross-border networking by governmental and economic actors. By analysing a peaceful European internal state border, I aim to assess the degree to which the networks for cross-border co-operation, functioning mainly in the realm of politics and administration, are actually capable of mobilising the broader population for an emerging cross-border regional identity. Thus, my main analytic focus is the tension (or lack of it) between the ongoing networking across the Franco-Spanish border and the everyday perceptions of territory among the broader population. The latter perspective is

especially helpful for assessing the idea of de-territorialising national identities in the context of a substate nationalism (for discussion of de-territorialised nationalism and cosmopolitan identities, see Kaldor 1996: 43; Cheach and Robbins 1998).

The chapter begins with an outline of the historical and political context within which cross-border regionalisation unfolds in Catalonia. I then chart present networking activities, understanding that they reflect a strategy for the participating actors to expand their capacity of governance (Le Galés 1998; Häkli 1999). I analyse these activities in the light of the results of an interview questionnaire mapping the attitudes of 'borderlanders' towards cross-border co-operation, the development of a borderless future, and the other side of the border. In theoretical terms, I seek to evaluate the relevance of network as a metaphor describing political and cultural changes and challenging the power of national identities in contemporary Europe.

### **A Short Political History of Catalonia**

It is difficult to understand the particular cultural and political situation of Catalonia, or the claims made about the region's broader relevance, without a brief historical reminder. However, as there are several well-written introductions to Catalan political history available (Sahlins 1998), I concentrate mainly on aspects that are relevant from the point of view of cross-border co-operation in the Catalan borderlands.

Catalan historiography lists various possible moments of birth for the political-cultural unit called *Catalunya*. Earliest references are made to the tenth century, when the region separated from the Carolingian Empire (Castells 1997: 43). Catalan political consciousness manifests itself at latest in the fourteenth century, when the term *Principat de Catalunya* appears in legal use for the first time (Brunn 1992: 134). Yet other moments of birth have been singled out, dated roughly to the Middle Ages (Pi-Sunyer 1980). However, perhaps more interesting than the (mythical) point of origin are events that have led to the territorial shaping of the Catalan borderlands.

In the fourteenth century, Catalonia was a distinct and vibrant Mediterranean trade centre with rather advanced representative institutions. Its language and literature were well-developed already when it formed a kingdom, the crown of Aragon, with its neighbouring regions of Aragon and Valencia. From this time dates the concept of a Catalan linguistic and cultural area, *els Països Catalans* (the Catalan lands), which today covers not only the Autonomous Community of Catalonia but also the northern parts of Valencia, the eastern parts of Aragon, the Balearic Islands, the Principality of Andorra, the French Roussillon, and the Sardinian town of Alghero (see figure 5.2) (Brunn 1992: 134).

The Crown of Aragon merged with the kingdom of Castile in the late fifteenth century through the marriage of Ferdinand, king of Aragon, and Isabella, queen of Castile. Although the unification was supposed to respect the Catalan language, culture, and institutions, over the next two centuries the Spanish state and Castilian culture made significant inroads in Catalonia (Laitin, Sole, and Kalyvas 1994: 9). In 1640, Catalan nobility in alliance with France joined with some of their rebellious peasants in a revolt (the Revolt of the Reapers) against the Castilian domination. The revolt was suppressed, and when peace between Spain and France was finally

established in 1659, the Catalan province of Roussillon and a portion of the Cerdanya valley (today's *Catalunya Nord*) were annexed to France (Pi-Sunyer 1980: 106). Thus, the Franco-Spanish boundary, currently crossed by various networks of co-operation, was set up in the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659 and erected gradually by the late eighteenth century.



**Figure 5.2.** Catalan linguistic and cultural area, els Països Catalans.

The end of Catalonia as a politically and legally distinct entity occurred only in the early eighteenth century, at the conclusion of the Spanish War of Succession, in which the Catalans again stood against Madrid, this time with the Austrians. Catalonia was defeated, and the new Castilian government erased the region's remaining privileges (Castells 1997: 45). Surprisingly, the surrender of Barcelona on September 11, 1714, is now celebrated as the Catalan national day. The ensuing rule by the Castilian central powers narrowed significantly the official use of the Catalan language, but the Church retained the right to use Catalan, which could also be freely used in social intercourse. The latter two pockets of freedom proved important for

the reproduction of Catalan language and culture, the cornerstones of Catalan nationalism, emerging as a mass movement between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The lack of political self-government notwithstanding, during the nineteenth century Catalonia, and especially the city and province of Barcelona, assumed a key position as the leading industrial region in Spain. The region's prospering textile industry and well-developed commercial tradition had their roots in the Mediterranean trade since the Middle Ages. Industrialisation had far-reaching consequences for political and cultural life in Catalonia. First, it drove the region's culture and lifestyles farther apart from the rest of Spain. While the majority of the country was heavily dependent on agricultural production and had a traditional land-owning upper class, Catalonia developed new industrial jobs and a rising bourgeoisie (Brunn 1992: 135). Second, industrialisation freed a growing number of people from traditional ties and habits and fostered their integration into new forms of social communication, groupings, and organisations. This was instrumental for the construction of civil society and modern political community in Catalonia, which provided the necessary seedbed for the Catalan movement. Third, extensive industrial production and trade relations connected Catalonia to the outside world in a manner that was not typical of the rest of Spain (Pi-Sunyer 1980: 107–8). The contemporary forms of integration and networking as outward-looking activities thus lean on a strong tradition in Catalonia.

Economic prosperity and the rising bourgeoisie encouraged the rise of modern nationalism in Catalonia by the beginning of the twentieth century (Garcia-Ramon and Nogué-Font 1994). According to Catalan historiography, the Catalan language and culture survived nineteenth century repression by the Central Powers, and the rising national movement was successful in strengthening the status of Catalan political institutions and language (Capdeferro 1967). In the 1932 constitutional reform Catalonia re-established autonomous status and gained its own parliamentary government, the *Generalitat de Catalunya*. However, the bloody Civil War and the accession of power by General Franco in 1939 again marked the withdrawal of Catalan autonomy for nearly four decades. The death of Franco in 1975 saw the re-establishment of democracy in Spain and gave rise to the 1978 Spanish Constitution. The new constitution recognised and guaranteed the right to autonomy of the 'nationalities and regions forming Spain', and set up the Autonomous Communities System (Guibernau 1997: 95).

As one of the Spanish autonomous communities, Catalonia has since the late 1970s gradually strengthened its political and cultural autonomy through the leadership of Jordi Pujol, the long-time president of the *Generalitat*. The 'official discourse', as promoted by Pujol and inscribed into the 1979 Catalan Statute of Autonomy, explicitly makes reference to Catalan territory, history, culture, institutions, and language as the markers of differentiation from others (Guibernau 1997: 95–96). Together with particular symbols, such as the Catalan flag, these are the elements that the Catalan nationalist discourse has successfully established as the emblems and constituents of the Catalan identity.

Although there is little reason to doubt the historical accuracy of this narrative, we would do well to pay attention to Michael Billig's (1995) warnings against the modernisation of history in nationalistic terms. From the fact that a

particular Catalan-speaking nobility emerged in the Middle Ages, acting in the name of *Catalunya* and its rulers, one cannot draw the conclusion that there existed a national community of Catalans in the modern sense, that is, a community of laypeople, peasantry, craftsmen, nobility, and merchants all defining themselves as one group. In fact, as is the case in most nations, the Catalan identity emerged among the broader population only after the rise of compulsory school education, mass media, industrial division of labour, and social movements (Pi-Sunyer 1980: 107; see also Paasi 1996). The fact that various vernacular tongues, Catalan among them, have existed in different parts of Europe hardly supports the idea of a nationally divided continent before the age of the nation-states and the particularly modern forms of collective life. Research on national identities has clearly shown that languages do not create nationalism so much as nationalism creates languages (Anderson 1991). Although all national languages are ancient human creations, their significance as anchors of collective identity and taken-for-granted 'boundary markers' between groups is of much more recent origin in the modern world of nation-states (Billig 1995: 30). The Catalan language was codified grammatically only in the early twentieth century, at the time of rising Catalan nationalism (Castells 1997: 45). It is at once a historical reality and a modern construct.

Yet contemporary Catalan national identity cannot be reduced to the claim that it is invented, of recent origin, or merely a social construct. For most Catalans the existence of a Catalan nation is a reality beyond question. The 'official' historiography is part and parcel of this conviction and cannot be measured against a truer, more original, or authentic Catalan history. But it is equally clear that national historiographies are not politically innocent because they legitimate the idea of the world consisting of enduring and distinctive political-cultural units. Catalan historiography is no exception, but adding to its particular character, it is said to be somewhat ambiguous in its relation to territoriality (Douglass 1998: 96). Brunn (1992: 134) notes that the Catalan movement sees itself as being mostly defined by linguistic and cultural factors, which can be mapped to *els Països Catalans*. Yet the Catalan Statute of Autonomy sets up the political territory of Catalonia as limited to the area consisting of the four provinces of Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona, which form the Autonomous Community of Catalonia (Guibernau 1997: 96). This is remarkable in the sense that it creates a constant tension between the extension of the linguistic-cultural area forming the (real and imagined) roots of Catalan identity and the territorial extension of the region's political power. It could be assumed that some of the actual networking in Catalonia can be accounted for by the fact that these two Catalan territorialities are not coincident.

### **Cross-Border Networking in Catalonia**

Considering the political history of the region, together with its contemporary strong economic, cultural, and political status, it would be tempting to view cross-border co-operation in Catalonia as a conscious effort and means to correct certain historical injustices. This interpretation finds support in the Catalan Statute of Autonomy, which states that the collaboration and cultural exchange with other self-governing communities and provinces is to be encouraged and special attention given to all those with which Catalonia has had particular historical, cultural, or commercial

links (Catalan Statute of Autonomy 1986: 39). Furthermore, the statute recognises the Catalan language as the heritage of other territories and communities and outlines the possibility of the establishment of cultural relations with states where such territories are located and such communities reside (Guibernau 1997: 96). However, due to the obvious sensitivity of such relations among Catalan-speaking territories, the statute only refers to cultural relations and explicitly denies the possibility of political association.

This is the political and geographic context in which networking and co-operation across the Franco-Spanish border take place. The border is the result of a peace treaty some three centuries ago, annexing Catalan-speaking areas to France. Today the annexed areas are known as *Catalunya Nord* in Catalonia and *Catalogne* in France, and they form a part of the 'greater Catalonia', *els Països Catalans*. Cultural relations of co-operation are officially recognised as the goal of the Catalan *Generalitat* (Catalan Statute of Autonomy 1986: 39). However, the Spanish Constitution implicitly circumscribes the nature of such relations to the nonpolitical (Guibernau 1997: 98), which means that Catalan politicians and the *Generalitat* will have to balance carefully between the policies of the Spanish government and the wishes of their own constituency (Ross 1996: 498).

In October 1991 the leaders of Catalonia and the two French regions of Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi-Pyrénées signed an agreement (*Carta de l'Euroregió*) establishing an institutional framework for the various forms of co-operation that had emerged between the regions since the early 1980s (*Euroregió* 1994). While the Euroregió Catalunya, Languedoc-Roussillon i Midi-Pyrénées is not the first official agreement on cross-border co-operation involving both the Spanish and the French Catalonias, it is perhaps the most visible and significant one. The two main goals of the Euroregion are (1) to develop methods for increasing interaction between the economic, social, and cultural actors in the region, and (2) to strengthen the role of this Euroregion as a motor for the European economy, together with fostering European integration and strengthening the position of Southern European regions (*Euroregió* 1994). In practice, Euroregion co-operation aims at concerted action by the constituent regions within the European Union bodies, as well as securing the support and acceptance of the Spanish and French governments for its large-scale projects. The latter is of particular importance because the respective states have often regarded actual cross-border co-operation with suspicion. One example is the states' lack of support for the high-speed train connection (*El Punt* 1992).

Euroregion activities involve the leaders of the three regions in an annual conference (*Conferència dels Presidents*) that co-ordinates and sets the main lines for Euroregion co-operation. A committee formed by leading administrators and specialists representing all regions oversees the realisation of the plan accepted in the presidential conference and sets up particular activities in sectoral working groups. The *Comité Tripartit de Coordinació* is also responsible for the Euroregion's budget. The actual co-operation is carried out by working groups (*grups de treball*) operating within six sectors: (1) traffic, infrastructure, and telecommunication; (2) enterprises, business life, and vocational training; (3) education, research, and the transfer of technology; (4) agriculture, fishing, and water supply; (5) culture, tourism, youth, and sports; and (6) environment and consumer guidance (*Euroregió document*



*estadística* 1993). The working groups are composed of officials qualified in the respective areas, so that all three regions are represented in all groups, and each region is responsible for the co-ordination of two working groups. Catalonia runs working groups one and five, Languedoc-Roussillon runs working groups three and four, and Midi-Pyrénées runs groups two and six (*Euroregió* 1994).

The Euroregion has a relatively broad, multilevel organisation but limited resources. With one full-time secretary, it is headquartered in the French Catalan area of Roussillon, in the town of Perpignan. However, as a form of co-operation the Euroregió Catalunya, Languedoc-Roussillon i Midi-Pyrénées represents a well-institutionalised, official, and high governmental level network that involves directly only members of the governmental, cultural, and scientific elite. There is no democratically elected body politically in charge of the Euroregion's activity, but the officials involved are to some degree accountable to their respective regional governments. Like most contemporary projects for enhanced regional governance (Le Galès 1998; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999), Euroregion co-operation becomes visible to the broader public mainly through the media, and to some degree through the realisation of concrete projects of general interest (for example, the improvement of roads crossing the border region).

In dealing with problems caused by the state border for regional development, Euroregion activities are co-ordinated with another, still broader network for cross-border co-operation, the Working Community of the Pyrenees (*Comunitat de Treball dels Pirineus, CTP*). Founded in November 1983, the CTP is an organisation for co-operation between the Spanish autonomous communities of Aragon, Catalonia, Navarra, and the Basque country; the French regions of Aquitania, Languedoc-Roussillon, and Midi-Pyrénées; and the principality of Andorra (*XV Consell Plenari* 1997). The CTP consists of a council (with seven representatives from each region), a co-ordination committee (the regions' presidents together with the permanent and special secretary), working commissions (four permanent and three special commissions focusing on different issue areas), and a secretary (permanent and special secretaries). The presidency of the CTP is circulated among the participating regions in two-year terms (*Carta d'Acció* 1994). The organisation is headquartered in Jaca (Aragon), where the secretaries are based.

While Euroregion co-operation has had difficulties in getting its voice heard in the Spanish and the French governments, the situation is still worse for the CTP, which has failed to gain official recognition as an international organisation. Consequently, the French and Spanish national governments rejected a cross-border co-operation programme prepared by the CTP. The programme, consisting of seventeen projects, sought resources from the European Union INTERREG funds, but the state governments refused to treat it as one totality and instead broke it down to the composite regional level (*XV Consell Plenari* 1997: 216). This illustrates the tendency by national governments to monopolise the formation of official relations across their boundaries and treat these under the traditional foreign policy concept (Keating 1998: 182).

Despite these problems, the CTP has the strategic goal of showing the ways in which the Pyrenees Mountains can function as a uniting rather than a separating element between the mountain communities. It co-ordinates projects and often provides them with know-how and partners from the other side of the border, both

essential requirements for funding from various EU sources, such as the INTERREG, the Leader, and the Feder programmes (*XV Consell Plenari* 1997). Like the Euroregion, the CTP is a well-institutionalised, high-level governmental form of activity involving numerous prominent actors, but without a directly elected, democratic, decision-making mechanism.

Together the Euroregion and the CTP frameworks support, initiate, and co-ordinate dozens of cross-border co-operation projects, ranging from small-scale initiatives, such as the production of basic information about the area for improved communication (*Atles de l'Euroregió* 1995), to lobbying for large-scale infrastructural projects, such as the high-speed train connection (TGV) from Barcelona to Montpellier (*El Punt* 1994). In addition to the Euroregion and the CTP, there are numerous other inter-regional networks, projects, and initiatives actively fostering cultural co-operation across the Franco-Spanish border. Among the most important are the network of Catalan universities based in Perpignan (*Xarxa d'Universitats Institut Joan Lluís Vives*), several projects for professional training funded by the INTERREG II programme (for example, training from export sales personnel specialising on the context of the Catalan economic region), cross-border co-operation on annual motor vehicle inspection, and wastewater treatment (*Banque d'experiences* 1996).

Additional initiatives for co-operation can be found on the local government level. For instance, the Pyrenean mountain municipalities have formed an association for co-operation; the town of Perpignan has established co-operative relations with Figueres, Lleida, and Girona; and there are numerous 'sister city' relations between the towns of Catalonia and *Catalunya Nord* (Roig 1997). The numerous public-private or civic associations' initiatives include cross-border co-operation between the chambers of commerce and between the symphony orchestras of Empordà and Languedoc-Roussillon; a network for transpyrenean studies; an institute for studies on the borderlands of the Cerdanya valley (*Institut d'Estudis Ceretans*); and a joint programme for tourism studies among the universities of Girona, Perpignan, and Montpellier (*El Punt* 1999).

There are literally dozens of initiatives and projects for cross-border co-operation between Catalonia and the regions north of the Franco-Spanish border. This is clearly in accordance with the *Generalitat's* policy, directed outward and stressing the connection of Catalonia to the north rather than to the rest of Spain. The policy reflects the ideology of the Convergence and Union Party (*Convergència I Unió*), and especially the ideas of its founder, President Jordi Pujol. He has for long argued for a distinctive Catalan identity rooted in the European past and giving rise to nationalism that does not seek independence but nevertheless is capable of developing within a larger state containing other national minorities (Pujol 1991; cf. Guibernau 1997: 106). Thus, in a manner closely reminiscent of that of Manuel Castells (1997), Pujol projects Catalonia and Catalanism as a model for Europe, a new concept of nation that perhaps can resolve political tensions caused by the European integration process and the erosion of the sovereign nation-state. Essential for the realisation of this ideology are the networks of co-operation across the boundaries of the Catalan political territory.

### ***Catalunya Nord* in the Schengen Era**

Many projects for cross-border co-operation in Catalonia involve partners from outside the immediate border area. The 'Four Motors for Europe' network, bringing together the regions of Catalonia, Baden-Württemberg, Lombardía, and Rhône-Alpes, is perhaps the most commonly cited example (Murphy 1993). However, in view of the changing role of European state boundaries, together with the ideas of a progressive form of nationalism in Catalonia, it is particularly interesting to focus on the relationship between Catalonia and *Catalunya Nord*.

As mentioned previously, a portion of the Catalan territory was annexed to France in the 1656 Treaty of the Pyrenees. This area can be named differently depending on the perspective adopted. In France the area is officially called *Pyrénées Orientales*, which in no way refers to the Catalan tradition in the region. An alternative name is *Roussillon*, a name that was given to the area when it was annexed to France, and which therefore recognises the particular political history of the region. It is also the latter part of the official name of the larger region of Languedoc-Roussillon. The term *Catalunya Nord* is evidently the most Catalan name, pointing explicitly at the area as part of a larger Catalan totality. The term has gained increasing popularity since the 1970s among politicians, businesspeople, and cultural activists, who have sought to strengthen their contacts and relations with the Spanish Catalonia, the *el Principat*. Although the Catalan term *Catalunya Nord* specifically refers to a vantage point from the Spanish side of the border, it is more and more commonly used also on the French side (*La Vanguardia* 1992).

Catalan culture and language have had difficulty flourishing in France, where the state has traditionally left little room for minority languages. Especially after laws on compulsory education in French were passed in 1885, the use of Catalan began to decrease, and the trend has continued to date. In a 1997 study by the regional council of Languedoc-Roussillon, only 17 percent of those interviewed could speak Catalan well, and 34 percent with some difficulty (*Avui* 1998). However, during the last three decades a renewed interest in the Catalan tradition has emerged in the area. There are several associations that seek to promote the traditional language and culture in *Catalunya Nord*. One of them is *Centre de Documentació i Animació de la Cultura Catalana*, which organises language courses and language services in Catalan and has a library with some thirty-five thousand volumes written in Catalan (*El Punt* 1999). Since 1972 it has also been possible to teach Catalan three hours per week in public schools, and the privately organised *Escola Bressola* schools and the *Arrels* school are fully bilingual. The numbers learning the language are still small, however; in 1995 the private schools had only some two hundred students (1 percent of school children). Only 15 percent of the children were studying Catalan in public schools (Verdaguer 1997).

In *Catalunya Nord* there is one radio station (*Ràdio Arrels*) broadcasting for Catalan speakers twenty-four hours per day, and French television has very little programming in Catalan. However, the Catalan television channels TV3 and Canal 33, broadcast from the Spanish side of the border, can be seen in the area. Some newspapers and journals are available in Catalan, and interestingly, the Spanish Catalan newspaper *El Punt* was circulated in *Catalunya Nord* in 1987 and is now re-entering the market on the French side (*El Punt* 1999). In addition to the media and

education, signs of an emerging Catalanism have surfaced in decisions made by some of the region's institutional actors. For example, the city of Perpignan (in Catalan *Perpinyà*) has begun to publish city council bulletins in both French and Catalan (*El Punt* 1994). The city has also encouraged the use of Catalan in postal services, popularised the slogan '*Perpinyà, la catalana*', and set up a particular body for Catalan affairs (*La Vanguardia* 1992). Twenty-two municipalities in *Catalunya Nord* have decided to review their land registers and change some place names from French back to their original Catalan form (*El Punt* 1993).

A significant event in the popular realm was the 1998 success of Perpignan's rugby team, USAP, which managed to fight its way to the finals of the national league. In the finals Catalan flags were waved and the players took pride in their 'Catalan-ness'. The latter is an important departure from the typically subordinate position the Catalan language and culture have occupied in relation to the dominant French culture (O'Brien 1993). With success in sports, the region's economic peripherality and cultural stigma were turned into a victory, one that was joyfully flagged by the popular Catalan hymn *la Estaca* (*La Semaine en Roussillon* 1999).

The renaissance of Catalan language and culture in *Catalunya Nord* has given a boost to the symbolic construction of a particular Catalan border landscape. The standard elements of this landscape include flags and banners with the colours and stripes of Catalonia, street signs with place names in Catalan, and narratives that depict traditional connections to the south. However, more concrete developments influencing the function and meaning of the Franco-Spanish border took place after Spain joined the EU in 1986. (France became a member of the EEC in 1957.) Since then, the border has become increasingly permeable, with two major developments. First, Spain signed the Schengen Agreement in November 1991, which abolished checks on persons at the Franco-Spanish border. Second, the Single European Market entered into force in January 1993, establishing the free movement of goods, services, and capital (Serra del Pino and Ventura i Ribal 1999). Consequently, from a border-crossing perspective, the border is practically nonexistent, even though it still separates two states from each other. The freedom of movement has the potential to encourage cross-border regionalisation in the Catalan borderlands, and in fact there are some signs of an emerging interest among businesses and consumers in the markets on the other side of the border (Lluís 1995). Unfortunately, some localities near the now-redundant border-crossing points have suffered substantial job losses because of the removal of customs formalities. It has been estimated that before 1993 as many as four thousand people were directly or indirectly employed by border formalities on the Spanish side alone (Wirth 1992). Currently only non-EU traffic, approximately 5 percent of all border crossings, is subject to customs formalities, and only a fraction of the previous jobs are necessary (Rivas 1994: 6). Understandably, those who lost their good jobs in the customs and related industries may not always think positively about the disappearance of the border.

In view of a potentially emerging cross-border identity, capturing both the Spanish and the French sides of the Catalan cultural area, the recent manifestations of Catalanism in *Catalunya Nord* are an interesting development. Furthermore, with the relaxed border control between France and Spain since 1993, economic integration across the border has gained more momentum than perhaps ever before since the mid-seventeenth century. However, the situation is complicated by the fact that not

all people living in *Catalunya Nord* are enthusiastic about Catalanism. Some commentators have pointed out that the recent revival of Catalanism in southern France has been over-interpreted in nationalistic terms, and that on the French side of the border the Catalan culture is merely a regional label without any broader political implications or wish to challenge the unity of the French state (*El Triangle* 1999). Furthermore, studies have shown that the Catalan identity is more exclusive in Spain than in France, where it is common for people to view themselves as French *and* Catalan (O'Brien 1993: 110). Whatever the case, it is clear that Catalan culture and symbols have experienced a renaissance in *Catalunya Nord*. The question that remains is whether the emerging linguistic and cultural linkages, together with the many networks for cross-border co-operation, are enough to foster cultural and political integration across the Franco-Spanish border and thus create a platform for an emerging cross-border identity.

### **Neither France Nor Spain?**

To chart the borderlanders' knowledge of and attitudes towards the deepening co-operation across the Franco-Spanish border and their opinions about the disappearance of the state boundary, 283 people were interviewed in Catalonia and 77 in *Catalunya Nord*. The interview was conducted according to a structured questionnaire, which contained questions about border crossings (how often and why); the end of border control between Spain and France (Is it positive or negative?); expectations for the future (Will the border persist or disappear completely?); cross-border co-operation (Should it exist or not?); the forms of co-operation (which ones people know about, and to what depth); and finally, what place name best describes that side of the border (region or state) where the person lives, the other side, and the borderlands as a whole.

Interviews were conducted in August 1999 in most counties (*comarques*) adjacent to or relatively proximate to the border, as well as in the major cities. In Catalonia the *comarques* of Cerdanya, Garrotxa, Alt Empordà, Pla de l'Estany, Baix Empordà, and Selva, as well as the cities of Barcelona, Girona, Tarragona, and Lleida, were included. In *Catalunya Nord* the interviews were done in Cerdagne, Vallespir, and Roussillon, as well as in the city of Perpignan. People were selected randomly, and the interviews were carried out literally on the street during the day time, including lunch time (siesta), so that actively working people could also be reached.

The results of the interviews reveal that the increasing permeability of the state boundary, brought about by European integration, is generally viewed in positive terms. Two out of three persons interviewed said that the abolition of border control had been a favourable development. Some differences across the border were found: In Catalonia the share of positive answers was somewhat greater than in *Catalunya Nord* (see table 5.1, question 1). The most frequently given reason for a positive attitude toward a more relaxed border control was that it has made border crossing much easier and quicker. Feelings of being European and having more freedom also were often mentioned. However, some interviewees both in Catalonia and in *Catalunya Nord* did not think that the permeable border was anything to be particularly happy about. When asked why, people typically referred to problems with

drugs, smuggling, immigration, and crime, which all can now cross the border more easily than before. The reasons given were very similar on both sides of the border.

Judging from the results of the interviews, it is clear that people living in the Catalan borderlands also think positively about co-operation across the border. Both in Catalonia and in *Catalunya Nord* the clear majority thought that co-operation is a good thing, and only a fraction of the interviewees viewed co-operation negatively (see table 5.1, question 2). A closer analysis did not reveal much variation according to the proximity of localities to the border. Interestingly, the only exception could be found in Cerdanya Valley, where the share of people with positive attitudes towards cross-border co-operation remained on a lower level than anywhere else. In Cerdanya (on the Spanish side), only 63 percent of those interviewed thought positively about co-operation, and in the French Cerdagne the respective share was not higher than 56 percent. This most likely reflects the tense relations among people living in the Cerdanya Valley, which historically has often been a zone of conflict between villages and nationalities. Similar observations have been made in other studies on the valley (Sahlins 1988; 1989; Mancebo 1999). However, in other locales cross-border co-operation was more appreciated, the positive replies varying between 72 and 99 percent.

**Table 5.1** Results of the Survey at the Catalan Borderlands

<b>1. How do you feel about the more relaxed border control?</b>				
	<i>Positive</i>	<i>No difference</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Total</i>
Catalonia	68.5	18.8	12.7	100.0
Catalunya Nord	55.8	27.3	16.9	100.0
<b>2. How do you feel about cross-border co-operation?</b>				
	<i>Positive</i>	<i>No difference</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Total</i>
Catalonia	80.6	11.3	8.1	100.0
Catalunya Nord	75.3	15.6	9.1	100.0
<b>3. Do you know some form of cross-border co-operation?</b>				
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>		<i>Total</i>
Catalonia	53.7	46.3		100.0
Catalunya Nord	59.7	40.3		100.0
<b>4. Do you know how cross-border co-operation is practically carried out?</b>				
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Partly</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
Catalonia	3.7	29.5	66.8	100.0
Catalunya Nord	5.0	25.8	69.1	100.0
<b>5. Do you know how to participate in decision making concerning cross-border co-operation?</b>				
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>		<i>Total</i>
Catalonia	25.1	74.9		100.0
Catalunya Nord	20.8	79.2		100.0
<b>6. Do you think that the border will disappear in the future?</b>				
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Do not know</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
Catalonia	38.2	19.8	42.0	100.0
Catalunya Nord	33.8	36.4	29.9	100.0

However, the interviews also revealed that despite all the publicity in newspapers and other media, people do not generally know much about concrete co-operation across the Franco-Spanish border in Catalonia (see table 5.1, question 3). Although more than half of those interviewed in Catalonia and in *Catalunya Nord* knew some existing forms of cross-border co-operation, the ones mentioned were most often 'sister cities', 'cultural exchange', or 'sports events'. A list of cross-border co-operation projects was also introduced, consisting of the following projects: the Euroregion, the CTP, Universitat Catalana d'Estiu, CeDACC, Institut d'Estudies Ceretans, Diada de Cerdanya, 'Four Motors for the Europe', Forum Civil Euromed, and sister cities co-operation. Of these, by far the most commonly known were the Universitat Catalana d'Estiu (65 percent) and the sister cities co-operation (68 percent), the former because it is a forum for Catalanist politics with a prominent place in the media, and the latter most likely because there are signs in many places telling about amicable relations between '*Ciutats agermanades*'. Understandably, in localities closer to the border people were generally more aware of cross-border co-operation than were those farther away from the border. For example, in Alt Empordà some 70 percent of the interviewed people were aware of some form of co-operation, whereas only 39 percent in Tarragona and 48 percent in Barcelona did so. In *Catalunya Nord* the same pattern was found. In the French Cerdagne some 78 percent of the interviewees knew about some kind of cross-border co-operation, while in Perpignan only 55 percent did. In all, proximity to the border seems to encourage people's interest in cross-border co-operation.

When asked if they know how cross-border co-operation functions in practice, the majority of people answered in the negative (see table 5.1, question 3). Between Catalonia and *Catalunya Nord* there was no significant difference in the share of negative answers; only a few were fully knowledgeable about co-operation practices. The lack of knowledge about cross-border politics is still more striking. When people were asked if they would know how to participate in decision making concerning cross-border co-operation, the overwhelming majority answered negatively (see table 5.1, question 5).

Despite the mainly positive attitudes towards the increasing permeability of the Franco-Spanish boundary, as well as towards cross-border co-operation, some questions revealed that the dividing function of the state boundary between Catalonia and *Catalunya Nord* is still very much the reality for many people. For example, when asked about expectations concerning the complete disappearance of the border, people showed much more hesitation than might have been expected (see table 5.1, question 6).

The perception of the boundary as a divider is even more explicit in answers to the question of what place names best describe the two sides of the border (region or state) seen from where the interviewed person lives. Although the answers could well have illustrated an understanding of the borderlands as in principle one unity, the opposite was most often the case. In Catalonia only some 20 percent of the interviewees used an integrative term for describing the other side of the border (for example, *Catalunya* or *Catalunya Nord*). Some 18 percent made reference to Catalonia, but as part of France (for example, *Catalunya Francesa*), and as 62 percent viewed the other side in strictly national terms (*França*). In *Catalunya Nord* the results were respectively 22 percent using an integrative term (*Catalunya* or

*Catalunya Sur*), 21 percent referring to Catalonia as part of Spain (*Catalogne Espanyola*), and 57 percent referring to a distinct national territory (*Espagne*). However, the fact that some 32 percent of those interviewed were actually able to find a name for the borderlands as a whole can be interpreted as a manifestation of a potential for emerging identifications across the border. Yet in almost half of the cases the term used was 'Pyrenees' instead of 'Catalonia' or *els Països Catalans*, which indicates that the unity of the borderlands is often seen in terms of physical landscape rather than cultural or political environment.

## Conclusion

In the light of this research, it seems justifiable to claim that Catalonia is a model for the 'New Europe'. Its political leaders, economic actors, and cultural elites are eagerly entering into relations of co-operation with actors and institutions outside Catalonia. An untiring advocate of pactism, Jordi Pujol has consistently emphasised the willingness of the Catalan government to favour networks of co-operation for enhanced self-government, rather than to strive for national separatism. However, this willingness cannot be explained by the Catalan political tradition only. The practical goals of policy making play an equally important role here (Genieys 1998; Häkli 1999). Economic, cultural, and political actors can enhance their resources for collective attainment of goals by entering into co-operative relations and networks with other actors. Following Bob Jessop (1995), these activities can be interpreted as instances of multiscale regional governance, serving the attempts to attain collective goals in and through specific configurations of governmental and nongovernmental institutions, organisations, and practices. The goals are typically economic, but they can also be cultural and political. And as in Catalonia, cross-border co-operation and transregional networks are sometimes found more attractive than mere domestic ones.

In this respect Castells's (1997) idea about Catalonia as an exemplary case among the European regions seems to be well founded. We can look at the numerous projects for cross-border co-operation and regionalisation and create different scenarios about their role in the emerging new political order in Europe. However, it is much less clear whether support can be found for claims according to which Catalonia also presents a model for a new kind of nationalism or cultural identity in Europe. Rather, in the light of this research, as well as many other studies of borderland identities (O'Dowd and Wilson 1996; Newman and Paasi 1998; Wilson and Donnan 1998), it seems that the existence of networks for cross-border co-operation will not necessarily lead to the rapid erosion of political and cultural identities connected to the history of the modern nation-state. They may simply add new layers or dimensions to European governance, which, depending on the social, cultural, and economic context, may or may not function as an important political arena. This is because networking tends to follow its own functional and institutional logic, which typically remains unconnected to people's everyday concerns. The fact that only a few people in Catalonia and *Catalunya Nord* know how cross-border projects operate or how to participate in the politics of regionalisation across the state border lends little support to the idea of an increasing awareness of shared political goals across the Catalan borderlands.



What can be safely concluded is that while the European political space is definitely going through multiple changes, these are experienced differently in different borderlands. Even though it is more and more easy to (physically) cross the (internal) borders of the integrated Europe, in many places the borders sit tight as cultural and/or imaginary dividers between national cultures. Studies on boundaries and identities have convincingly shown that state borders are essential for the establishment and negotiation of national identities. Therefore, in Michael Billig's (1995: 60) terms, to remove the Franco-Spanish border would require the dissolution of the *forms of life* that produce and reproduce 'Frenchness' and 'Spanishness' in the Catalan borderlands. Despite the many cross-border networks emerging in Catalonia, this is not likely to happen in the foreseeable future.

**Acknowledgements:** I wish to thank Laura Puigbert and Riikka Taipale, who helped in collecting empirical material for the study. Special thanks are also due to Joan Nogué, who kindly offered me facilities at the University of Girona in June through September 1999. The research was financially made possible by the Academy of Finland research grant 62424.

## References

- Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.
- Aïles de l'Euroregió Catalunya, Languedoc-Roussillon, Midi-Pyrénées. 1995. Montpellier: Conseil Régionaux du Languedoc-Roussillon.
- Avui. 1998, April 9. Una enquesta detecta una davallada del català a la Catalunya Nord, 18.
- Banque d'experiences: Programme d'initiative commeunautaire 'Interreg II' France-Espagne. 1996. Toulouse: DRTEFP.
- Billig, M. 1995. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.
- Brunn, G. 1992. The Catalans within the Spanish monarchy from the middle of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. In A. Kappeler, ed. *The Formation of National Elites*, 133–60. Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing.
- Capdeferro, M. 1967. *Historia de Cataluña*. Barcelona: Editorial M.&S.
- Carta d'Acció de la Comunitat de Treball dels Pirineus. 1994. Torre del Reloj, España: Comunidad de Trabajo de los Pirineos.
- Castells, M. 1997. *The Power of Identity*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- The Catalan Statute of Autonomy*. 1986. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Catalan Linguistic and Cultural area, els Països Catalans*. 1971. Original map published in Tàrraga, Catalonia, Spain.
- Cheach, P., and B. Robbins, eds. 1998. *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cooke, P. 1989. The local question—Revival or survival? In P. Cooke, ed. *Localities: The Changing Face of Urban Britain*, 296–306. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Cossentino, F. 1996. *Local and Regional Response to Global Pressure: The Case of Italy and Its Industrial Districts*. Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies.
- Douglass, W. A. 1998. A western perspective on an eastern interpretation of where north meets south: Pyrenean borderland cultures. In T. M. Wilson and H. Donnan, eds. *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*, 62–95. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- El Punt*. 1992, July 11–1999, September 2.
- El Triangle*. 1999, February 3.
- Euroregió: Bilan et perspectives 1989-1994*. 1994. Perpinyà, França: Plein Soleil.
- XV Consell Plenari, Bertiz—Oieregi, Navarra 24.-25.4.1997. 1997. Torre del Reloj, España: Comunidad de Trabajo de los Pirineos.
- Garcia-Ramon, M. D., and J. Nogué-Font. 1994. Nationalism and geography in Catalonia. In D. Euroregió document estadístic. 1993. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Hooson, ed. *Geography and National Identity*, 197–211. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Genieys, W. 1998. Autonomous communities and the state in Spain: The role of intermediary elites. In P. Le Galès and C. Lequesne, eds. *Regions in Europe*, 166–80. London: Routledge.
- Grant, R. 1998. The political geography of European integration. In B. Graham, ed. *Modern Europe: Place, Culture and Identity*, 145–63. London: Arnold.
- Guibernau, M. 1997. Images of Catalonia. *Nations and Nationalism* 3, no. 1: 89–111.
- Häkli, J. 1999. Cross-border regionalization in the 'New Europe'—Theoretical reflection with two illustrative examples. *Geopolitics* 4, no. 3: 83–103.
- Jessop, B. 1995. The regulation approach, governance and post-fordism. *Economy and Society* 24, no. 3: 311–20.
- Kaldor, M. 1996. Cosmopolitanism versus nationalism: The New Divide? In R. Caplan and J. Feffer, eds. *Europe's New Nationalism*, 42–58. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Keating, M. 1996. *Nations against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- . 1998. *The New Regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial Restructuring and Political Change*. Cheltenham: Elgar.
- La Vanguardia*. 1992, February 7. Catalán del Rosellón, 15.
- La Semaine en Roussillon*. 1999. 159, no. 6, May 12. Jordi Pujol a Perpinyà, 11.
- Laitin, D., C. Sole, and S. N. Kalyvas. 1994. Language and the construction of states: The case of Catalonia in Spain. *Politics and Society* 22, no. 1: 5–30.
- Le Galès, P. 1998. Conclusion—Government and governance of regions: structural weaknesses and new mobilisation. In P. Le Galès and C. Lequesne, eds. *Regions in Europe*, 239–67. London: Routledge.
- Lluís, J.-L. 1995. Els nostre ofici és estimar els clients perquè tornin. *Presència* November 5: 42–43.
- MacLeod, G., and M. Goodwin. 1999. Space, scale and state strategy: Rethinking urban and regional governance. *Progress in Human Geography* 23, no. 4: 503–27.
- Mancebo, F. 1999. *La Cerdagne et ses frontières: Conflits et identités transfrontalières*. Perpinya, France: Trabucaire.
- Mouqué, D., ed. 1999. *Sixth Periodic Report on the Social and Economic Situation and Development of Regions in the European Union*. Brussels: EU Commission.
- Murphy, A. B. 1993. Emerging regional linkages within the european community: challenging the dominance of the state. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 84, no. 2: 103–18.
- Newman, D., and A. Paasi. 1998. Fences and neighbours in the postmodern world: Boundary narratives in political geography. *Progress in Human Geography* 22, no. 2: 186–207.
- O'Brien, O. 1993. Good to be French? Conflicts of identity in North Catalonia. In S. Macdonald, ed. *Inside European Identities: Ethnography in Western Europe*, 98–117. Oxford: Berg.
- O'Dowd, L., and T. M. Wilson. 1996. Frontiers of sovereignty in the new Europe. In L. O'Dowd and T. M. Wilson, eds. *Borders, Nations and States*, 1–18. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Paasi, A. 1996. *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness: The Changing Geographies of the Finnish-Russian Border*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Pi-Sunyer, O. 1980. Dimensions of Catalan nationalism. In C. R. Foster, ed. *Nations Without a State: Ethnic Minorities in Western Europe*, 101–15. New York: Praeger.
- Pujol, J. 1991. *La personalitat diferenciada de Catalunya*. Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya.
- Rivas, M. 1994. Supervivents de la frontera. *El Punt* January 11: 6–7.
- Roig, S. 1997. Els Pirineus: Una cremallera que es descorda. *Revista de Girona* 181: 9–10.
- Ross, C. 1996. Nationalism and party competition in the Basque country and Catalonia. *West European Politics* 19, no. 3: 488–506.
- Sahlins, P. 1988. The nation in the village: State-building and communal struggles in the Catalan borderland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *Journal of Modern History* 60: 234–63.
- . 1989. *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1998. State formation and national identity in the Catalan borderlands during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In T. M. Wilson and H. Donnan, eds. *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*, 31–61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Author's copy. Originally published in Kaplan, D. & Hägerstrand, J. (eds.) *Boundaries and Place: European borderlands in geographical context*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield (2002), 70-92.

- Serra del Pino, J., and A. Ventura i Ribal. 1999. *Catalunya 2015: Opcions polítiques per al segle XXI*. Barcelona: Centre UNESCO de Catalunya.
- Verdaguer, P. 1997. Catalunya del Nord: poc català a l'escola. *El Temps*. February 22. 1997, 11.
- Wilson, T. M., and H. Donnan. 1998. Nation, state and identity at international borders. In T. M. Wilson and H. Donnan, eds. *Border Identities: Nation and State at International Frontiers*, 1-30. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wirth, R. 1992. La Jonquera se queda fuera del mapa. *La Vanguardia* January 11: 2-3.